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Lander, H. Clapham

A proposal for the establishment of a new...

London

[1918]

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  5  090     ▾b  ↔
  6  049     PR1A ↔
  7  100 1   Lander, H. Clapham. ↔
  8  245 12  A proposal for the establishment of a new town ▾h [microform]. ↔
  9  260     London : ▾b [National Labour Press Ltd., ▾c 1918] ↔
 10  300     15 p. ; ▾c 21 cm. ↔
 11  500     "For private circulation." ↔
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TECHNICAL MICROFORM DATA

FILM SIZE: 35mm **REDUCTION RATIO:** 9:1 **IMAGE PLACEMENT:** IA (IIA) IB IIB

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A Proposal for the Establishment of a New Town

For Private Circulation

Price Twopence

Copies of this pamphlet and any further information desired in regard to these proposals may be obtained upon application to the undersigned—

H. Clapham Lander, Secretary,
127 Central Buildings,
Westminster, S.W.

Preamble

BELIEVING that our present social and economic relations give little encouragement to those aspirations in man which work towards brotherhood and goodwill but rather provide a soil for the growth of private, class and party interests; and believing further that the motive of private profit is not only unsatisfying and wasteful but also repugnant to those ideals of mutual aid and personal service planted in the heart of man; and believing further that the time has arrived to provide conditions more in accordance with man's present and future needs—

We have resolved to take the necessary steps for the inauguration and conduct in this country of such an experiment in land tenure and mutual aid in agriculture, manufacture and distribution as will give freer scope for the development of a fuller and more harmonious civic, economic and personal life.

To carry out an enterprise of this character we propose the foundation of a new town which in itself would be a valuable object-lesson in social reconstruction and provide a fruitful field for experiments in management generally, in the organisation of manufacture and distribution and in enterprise in many directions. It should be understood at the outset that we have no desire to hamper the growth of our scheme by laying down any hard and fast

rules or conditions in matters of detail: on the contrary we realise that as pioneers the only wise course is to maintain an open mind upon such matters until we have learned all that experience and the advice of those interested in such problems can teach us.

In any undertaking, the first question we shall ask ourselves, or those who desire to associate with us, is not—will it earn a profit or a dividend? But primarily, will it tend to enrich human life? The burden of poverty which presses so heavily upon the great majority of our fellows is due in the main to the fact that wealth and power are the monopoly of a few and that labour is used to produce wealth in which it does not adequately participate. It is our aim accordingly in the proposals which follow—by exercising control over such essentials to human activity as land, machinery and, as far as practicable, means of distribution and exchange—to indicate a means whereby the rewards of industry, in all its forms, may be more equitably shared by those who contribute to their production and to secure for all a fuller opportunity for self-expression in life and work.

The promoters of the present proposal are conversant with the initiation and growth of Letchworth Garden City, which has proved an object lesson of first importance in certain aspects of social development. Whilst, however, fully appreciating the value of Letchworth as a social experiment we believe the time is opportune for the crystallization of yet other social and industrial ideals and particularly that represented by co-operation or association within the community. On the social side an effort will be made to create a civic centre expressing the educational and recreative needs of the people and represented by such institutions as the School, Public Hall adapted

for music and the drama, Library and Reading Room, Museum, Guest House and Café grouped in association with the Public Park and Recreation Ground.

As far as practicable, all houses will be built and owned by the town, due regard being had to the varying requirements of prospective tenants. Careful consideration will also be given to the possibilities of association in all branches of domestic requirements.

The main shopping needs of the town will be met by the provision of a Central Store with departments for the sale of goods of various kinds, thus obviating the necessity for the ordinary private retail shop. The store would also be the centre for the distribution of articles of whatever kind produced or manufactured in the town, whether by individuals or groups; and also of articles supplied from any outside desirable source, giving preference, however, to goods manufactured under sound and just conditions.

On the industrial side it is proposed to inaugurate various activities of a co-operative character in field, factory and workshop which may be undertaken with the object of producing for use rather than for profit. At the same time there will be a cordial welcome given to craftsmen and workers developing their own lines of industry with a view to the excellence of the product or the raising of the standard of individual workmanship.

We propose, accordingly, pending the formation of a Permanent Company, to float a pioneer organisation with a capital of £25,000 whose object shall be to make enquiries as to suitable sites of about 3000 acres, to obtain reports and when desirable to secure an option of purchase.

It shall be the object of the Permanent Company to provide *(a)* such a basis for economic life as will

eliminate, as far as possible, the exploitation of labour through rent, interest and profit for private ends, thus securing to the worker a fuller recompense for his labour, *(b)* useful work under healthy conditions as well as substantial and convenient houses with gardens, *(c)* a common, comprehensive and unified system of Education, regard being had to the discipline of real work and to full opportunity for the development of individuality, *(d)* facilities for different forms of recreation. In short, to provide such an environment as will give free scope to the development amongst its citizens of a healthy social life based upon mutual aid and good will.

With this object in view, it will be the business of the Permanent Company to acquire a site suitable for agricultural, industrial and residential development. Under the best advice obtainable to prepare plans for such development, to make roads, to lay water, gas and electric mains and undertake other public services, to erect buildings and to undertake the manufacture and distribution of such commodities as may be deemed advisable, to let sites and to promote subsidiary companies to carry out allied and subordinate enterprises upon the same principles as those of the Permanent Company.

Outline of Proposals for Constitution & Management

PERMANENT COMPANY

The Permanent Company will be registered under the Companies Acts.

CAPITAL

The nominal capital of £250,000 will be divided into Founders' Shares and Ordinary Shares of £1 each. In addition, further sums will be required to be raised by way of loan as may be found necessary. It is desired that persons holding a few shares only may not be entirely overridden by large shareholders.

Founders' Shares will entitle holders to vote at Company meetings during the lifetime of the original holders, but will bear no interest. Holders of shares up to £1000 will be entitled to one vote for every complete £50; above £1000 one additional vote for every complete £100.

Ordinary Shares will entitle holders to vote at Company meetings and receive a limited return. Holders of less than £100 will be entitled to one vote; holders of £100 will be entitled to two

votes with one additional vote for every complete £100 up to £1000; above £1000 one additional vote for every complete £500.

DIRECTORATE

In the first instance the Board will be representative of the shareholders and the originators of the proposal; later on, and in increasing proportion, of the residents.

In order not to exclude from the Board men and women of high ideals, public spirit, ability and experience, the technical qualification for Director shall consist in the holding of one share.

SURPLUSES

After discharging all current financial obligations, the surplus, if any, will be devoted to such objects as the improvement of the town and the benefit of the inhabitants in a collective capacity, the establishment elsewhere of undertakings conducted on principles similar to those of the Company, and the creation of a Fund for the redemption of interest-bearing Capital.

SCOPE AND POWERS

The Company will retain in its own possession the freehold of all the property acquired, excepting that it will have the power to sell or dispose of such plots and areas as may be required for sites for places of worship, public institutions and purposes which are deemed by the Company to be of public utility. The Company will take wide powers of land purchase and development, building, banking, trading, etc., in the British Islands and elsewhere, and will undertake the provision of such public services as Water, Gas, Electricity aud other services

and industries including Agriculture as may seem advisable from time to time.

SUBSIDIARY COMPANIES

Industries such as Farming, a General Store, Banking, Building, Printing, Engineering Works, Furniture Manufactory, Weaving, Jam Making, &c., may be undertaken by Subsidiary Companies whose capital will be subscribed by the Permanent Company or the public or both. The Permanent Company will have the right of appointing at least one third of the Board of each Subsidiary Company. The constitution of every Subsidiary Company will be approved by the Permanent Company and the books of each Subsidiary Company will be open to the confidential inspection of the audit department of the Permanent Company.

DISPOSAL OF SURPLUS

It will not be competent for any Subsidiary Company to make a profit for distribution amongst its shareholders. After discharging all current financial obligations, including a limited interest upon capital, and setting aside a suitable reserve, a proportion of any further so-called profit (as determined, for example, under the rules of Co-operative Societies registered under the Industrial and Provident Societies Acts), will be paid to the Permanent Company for civic development, and the remainder will be devoted in such proportions as may be hereafter decided by the Subsidiary Company to such objects as the raising of wages, the improvement of the conditions of employment, the establishment of a closer identification of interest between the Company and its employees, a reduction in price to the consumer, educational and charitable purposes, and the creation of a fund for the redemption of the interest-bearing Capital.

ALLOWED COMPANIES

The Permanent Company will be at liberty to let sites or premises to other approved companies having objects similar to those of the Permanent Company, provided the constitution of any such company has been approved, that its books are open to the inspection of the Permanent Company as in the case of the Subsidiary Company, and that its surplus is dealt with as in the case of a Subsidiary Company.

SMALL INDUSTRIES

The Permanent Company will further be at liberty to let sites or premises to private persons or firms engaged in small industries or small holdings, but such businesses will be required as far as possible to conform to the conditions imposed upon companies, and should the number of employees exceed, say, five, will come under the regulations for inspection of books and disposal of surplus. Should the business be sold the Permanent Company will have the option of purchase.

The Company will exercise discretion as to what industries will be admitted to the town with a view to excluding undesirable trades.

AGRICULTURE

The cultivation of the land as a matter of primary national importance will of necessity demand immediate attention. In the selection of a site due regard will be paid to its suitability for mixed farming. In view of the proposed size of the site it is expected that not less than 1500 acres will be maintained for farming purposes and that of this between 350 and 500 acres could with advantage

be utilised at the outset. Of the farm area a considerable part will be put under plough and provision will also be made for fruit growing and poultry raising, as the character of the soil may allow. A dairy herd will be kept and a pure milk supply will form a special feature of the experiment.

WORKERS

In each industry, including those controlled by private persons, special regard will be had, in the approval of plans, to hygienic conditions according to the requirements of each trade, and the workers will be paid not less than the Trade Union or standard rate of wages, and will be allowed full liberty of combination. In every company, the constitution will provide for adequate participation by the workers in the control of the undertaking, whether by representation on the Directorate or otherwise. Every opportunity will also be afforded for groups of workers to form their own associations for production, &c., provided they adhere to the principles governing the whole experiment.

The Permanent Company will be empowered to establish as soon as will appear desirable an employment bureau with the view of preventing as far as practicable periods of unemployment.

HEALTH

Medical and Nursing staffs will as soon as practicable be appointed and residents will be invited to join a voluntary scheme the object of which will be the prevention as well as the cure of disease. With this object the Permanent Company will be empowered to collect in advance from all persons joining such scheme suitable fees, calculated upon the size, age, &c., of each household, and to appoint and pay one

or more medical practitioners and nurses whose services, in case of illness, &c., will be at the disposal of all such persons.

EDUCATION

It is intended that Education in its various branches shall be regarded as a main business and responsibility of the new town. It should be possible to develop on free lines the individuality of each pupil and to put him into real touch with every part of his environment. There should be a school common to all in which artificial divisions into elementary, secondary and technical would be obliterated. There should be, between the life of the school and of the town, both on the intellectual and industrial sides, a vital connection and thus school life would in a real sense be a preparation for future citizenship.

WE are satisfied that the hope of a peaceful evolution in the future depends upon the application of the principles of mutual service and goodwill to the problems of daily life, and we therefore appeal to those who share our views to assist us by all means within their power. We ask those who have business ability and experience to place these at the disposal of their fellow men; to the workers we appeal for their confidence, and to those who have money for their financial assistance.

We do not suggest that all sympathisers should leave their present work, economic or social, to cast in their lot with the new town. Those carrying on business or residing as at present may ultimately come into organic connection with the scheme and form links in a chain of connected enterprise. Meanwhile, they may in many cases at once become centres of help, as exchanges of experience and information.

With the co-operation of all in mutual service for the common good we go forward in the full assurance that the project has within it the essentials of success and that it has possibilities of development to which no limits can be set.

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January 1918.

National Labour Press
Ltd., 8 & 9 Johnson's
Court, Fleet Street,
London, E.C.4

21351

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TITLE